



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

For Immediate Release

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Update and Explanation of Available Agriculture Assistance

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Heath Shuler is currently pursuing multiple tracks of assistance for Western North Carolina farmers affected by the Easter Weekend Freeze.

“My office is currently working closely with local farmers, the North Carolina Farm Bureau, as well as local, state, and federal officials to get our farmers the assistance they need,” said Congressman Shuler. “I will continue doing everything in my power to help our farmers.”

If Henderson County and other counties affected by the Easter Weekend Freeze are designated as disaster areas by the Secretary of Agriculture, as requested by Governor Easley, affected farmers in those counties will be eligible for low-interest emergency loans.

These loans are funded annually through the normal appropriations process in Congress. (SEE ATTACHED FACT SHEET FROM THE USDA).

These emergency loans will be available to affected farmers, after disaster designation, regardless of whether the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2007 (HR 1591) is signed into law by President Bush.

In addition to the emergency loans available through the disaster designation, if the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill is signed into law, farmers with crops lost due to a natural disaster would be eligible for payments, if the crops had been planted prior to February 28, 2007. (PLEASE SEE ATTACHED CROP DISASTER PROGRAM INFO SHEET)

A veto from President Bush on the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill will not affect the emergency loans that will be made available to farmers if the counties are designated as disaster areas by the Secretary of Agriculture.

If President Bush does veto the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill that has been sent to him Congressman Shuler will seek to have emergency payments to farmers added to the next supplemental appropriations bill the House of Representatives considers.

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**Crop Disaster Program Included in the Emergency Supplemental
Spending Bill Sent to the President on April 26, 2007**

The legislation provides crop production loss assistance in a manner similar to previous disaster programs for quantity losses occurring from natural disasters and related conditions that occurred in 2005, 2006, or crops planted prior to February 28, 2007.

A producer would choose for which one of the three years he or she would receive benefits. The loss threshold for eligibility is 35% and the payment rate is set at 50% of the established crop insurance price. Only producers with crop insurance coverage or that signed up for the Non-insured Assistance Program would be eligible for assistance. The 95% crop value cap and deduction for crop insurance indemnities would be in place.

Quality loss assistance is based on the actual, local market discounts suffered by producers based on their crop sales receipts, or as established by the State Farm Service Agency Committee. Payments are to be made on 65% of the crop quantity subject to quality discounts at a payment rate equal to 50% of the market loss sustained by the producer if they had crop insurance or NAP.